

S E C R E T

MEETING OF HISTORICAL OFFICERS

15 February 1968

1330, G A 13 Hqs.

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1. [REDACTED], Executive Secretary of the CS Historical Board, opened the meeting by announcing the resignation of his research assistant, [REDACTED]

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He introduced her replacement, [REDACTED] also mentioned Mr. Karamessines' concern about the security of our program regarding the handling of papers and documents in a secure and controlled manner.

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2. Before introducing [REDACTED] the Executive Secretary gave [REDACTED] the Professor's life [REDACTED] took the floor outlining history and how it is written. (See Attachment.)

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3. The meeting was then opened for questions and/or comments. Mr. [REDACTED] stated that in regard to the writing of history the historian makes his own interpretation of the facts as long as it is not personal opinion. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] pointed out that whereas strong presentation and points of view might help the sale of a book on the market, such was not the case with our writing of history which is seen by only a few people and dedicates itself to chronological facts rather than free theory.

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4. To explain further the term "setting" in his diagram of the two types of historical writing (Chart A of Attachment), [REDACTED] illustrated it by saying that a base established in a particular region necessitates mentioning the conditions in that region at the time that base was set up, background which is specific or general stating why something took place. He doesn't see the need for a highly developed framework of causation because of the level at which we are writing and of the nature of the sources. [REDACTED] added that the setting is the political/economic climate in which a particular station operated and the operational environment. With the aid of a diagram,

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[REDACTED] went on to explain how one subject in a

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particular time span when discussed fully is put out of focus when a different subject is treated in that same time span. The Professor suggested that when we find that something occurred that breaks the period of time into various smaller time spans, that this great change end the first section. Then, review what has taken place (with the effects, etc.) and treat the new set of circumstances as a new beginning. By having shorter time spans the reader is more aware of what took place and the importance of the chronology is not minimized when the main events are treated by description and analysis. The nature of the break, the human activity dealt with, will determine which pattern of historical writing to follow, whether continuity outweighs the construct. [REDACTED] suggested a combination of the topical and chronological histories when no great change takes place.

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5. [REDACTED] gave a rundown of some of the uses of our histories as presented to him by the Executive Secretary: keeping a record for the future, briefing people who are going out to the area or coming in an office, training purposes, budgetary purposes. The Professor also pointed out the fact that the better the histories are of the directorates, the easier it will be to write a good one for the Agency as a whole.

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6. [REDACTED] recognized the problem we have with conflicting evidence which can't always be compromised. As to differences of opinion between people in the field and at Headquarters, both points of view can be expressed once the problem of contacting both parties involved has been surmounted.

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7. [REDACTED] questioned the similarity between a chronology and a monograph. The Professor understands a monograph to be a detailed treatment of an event or operation in contrast to a more general or chronological treatment of that subject. An historical monograph is an analytical

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[REDACTED] recommended the use of a monograph where you can't get all the detail into a chronological history, with reference in the main history itself to a separate paper dealing specifically with the change.

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8. It was suggested that a significant historical event or some great change be the cutoff point for the particular history since the status of the station will probably change and require specific treatment. The type of audience catered to will also affect the type of method used in writing histories - whether great detail is wanted or just a brief rundown - as in military categorization of history (administrative and operational histories). An organizational history deals with the subject insofar as it affects the organization of the station rather than carrying it down to the smallest point which is covered in the monograph.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 1515 hours.

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Attachment:

